

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

1-49. (Cancelled)

50. (Currently Amended) A nerve retractor assembly for manipulation of the spinal neurostructure, the assembly comprising, a retractor blade; and a retractor body adapted for unobstructed view of the retracted area wherein the retractor body is provided with first and second enlarged edges extending in an axial direction and defining a channel therebetween adapted to engagingly receive the retractor blade, the retractor blade engaged with the first and second enlarged edges to maintain the retractor blade in a predetermined position relative to the retractor body, the channel being open in lateral direction between the first and second enlarged edges and the retractor blade being shaped to provide an unobstructed view of a retracted area of a surgical site.

51. (Previously Presented) The nerve retractor assembly of claim 50 wherein the retractor body further includes at least one supporting member mounted thereon for attaching a retractor pin, and a retractor pin attached to a first one of the at least one supporting member for fixedly positioning the retractor blade relative to the neural structure.

52. (Previously Presented) The nerve retractor assembly of claim 51 wherein the at least one supporting member defines a hollow tube for receiving the retractor pin.

53. (Previously Presented) The nerve retractor assembly of claim 50 wherein the channel is a concave channel.

54. (Currently Amended) The nerve retractor assembly of claim 51 and further including a second retractor pin having a handle and a shaft disposed between the pin and the handle and slideably received in the at least one supporting members.

55. (Currently Amended) A nerve retractor assembly for manipulation of the spinal ~~neuronstructure~~ neurostructure, the assembly comprising:

a retractor body ~~adapted for unobstructed view of the retracted area, the retractor body~~ including a channel and a first supporting member and a second supporting member, the first and second support members extending in an axial direction and positioned on opposite sides of the channel, each of the first supporting member and the second supporting member mounted to the retractor body and adapted for attaching a first and a second retractor pin, respectively; and

the first retractor pin being attached to the first supporting member and the second retractor pin received for movement within the second supporting member, the channel being open in lateral direction between the first and second support members to provide an unobstructed view of a retracted area of a surgical site.

56.-62. (Cancelled)

63. (Previously Presented) The nerve retractor assembly of claim 50 wherein the retractor blade is received in the channel for slidable movement towards a distal end of the channel.

64. (Currently Amended) The nerve retractor assembly of claim 63 wherein at least a portion of the retractor blade and at least a portion of the channel are in slidable contact during said slidable movement of the retractor blade toward the distal end.

65. (Previously Presented) The nerve retractor assembly of claim 55 further including a retractor blade having a shape complementary to a shape of the retractor body.

66. (Currently Amended) The nerve retractor assembly of claim 55 further including a retractor blade, ~~the retractor body defining a~~ the channel configured to receive the retractor blade.

67. (Currently Amended) The nerve retractor assembly of claim 66 wherein ~~the channel is formed between~~ the first and second supporting members define axially extending edges, the retractor blade engaged with the axially extending edges to maintain the retractor blade in a predetermined position relative to the retractor body.

68. (Currently Amended) The nerve retractor assembly of claim 66 wherein the first and second supporting members define axially extending edges that are adapted to engage the retractor blade to maintain the retractor blade within the channel.

69. (Previously Presented) The nerve retractor assembly of claim 66 wherein the retractor blade is received in the channel for slidable movement towards a distal end of the channel.

70. (Previously Presented) The nerve retractor assembly of claim 66 wherein the retractor blade is fixedly engaged with the retractor body to maintain the retractor blade in a predetermined position relative to the retractor body.

71. (Currently Amended) A retractor assembly, comprising:
a retractor body having a support portion ~~having a shape configured to provide an unobstructed view of a surgical site, the retractor body further~~ including at least one support member defining a channel and having an enlarged edge extending in an axial direction along the channel;

a retractor blade ~~having a shape complimentary to the shape of the support portion,~~
received within the channel and engaged with the enlarged edge such that the retractor blade is
held in a predetermined position relative to the retractor body by the at least one support member; and

the retractor blade having a shape complementary to a shape of the support portion and

the channel being open in lateral direction to provide an unobstructed view of a retracted area of a surgical site.

72. (Currently Amended) The retractor assembly of claim 71 wherein the retractor body includes first and second ones of the at least one support member ~~and a~~ with the channel formed between the first and second support members.

73. (Previously Presented) The retractor assembly of claim 72 further comprising a first pin receivable within a first opening in the first support member and a second pin receivable within a second opening in the second support member.

74. (Currently Amended) The retractor assembly of claim 73 wherein the second pin includes a handle and a shaft extending ~~therefore~~ therefrom, the shaft comprising the second pin received in the second opening in the second support member.

75. (Previously Presented) The retractor assembly of claim 74 wherein a distal end portion of the second pin is forcibly inserted into a tissue for maintaining a position of the retractor assembly relative to the surgical site.

76. (Currently Amended) The retractor assembly of claim 71 wherein the ~~retractor body defines a channel~~ is configured to slidably receive the retractor blade.

77. (Previously Presented) The retractor assembly of claim 76 wherein at least a portion of the retractor blade and at least a portion of the support portion of the retractor body are in slidable contact during sliding movement of the retractor blade within the channel.

78. (Previously Presented) The retractor assembly of claim 76 wherein the retractor blade includes a stop to limit sliding movement of the retractor blade within the channel.

79. (Previously Presented) The retractor assembly of claim 71 wherein the retractor blade includes a distractor tip sized and shaped for insertion into an intervertebral space for distraction of the intervertebral space.